BENGALURU, FRIDAY, JANUARY 19, 2024 www.Bangaloremirror.com 12 Pages PRICE ₹3

Bangalore Mirror

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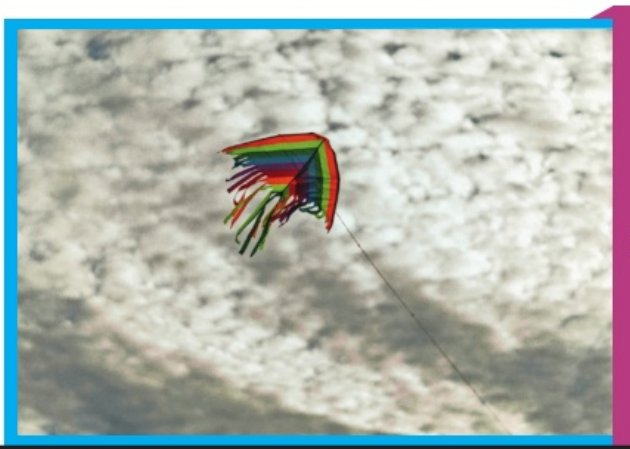
TREE COUNT

BCU to do its own census while BBMP fails to start it at all

PAGE 2



THREAD BARE

Bird-killer kite string cases rise with no checks by authorities

PAGE 5

Who shall penalise BBMP for dumping C&D debris and creating a black spot near National College Ground?

DUMP AND DUMPER

'Vacant land, C&D waste belong to civic body'

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TWEETS @BangaloreMIRROR

The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) is said to be a role model for citizens especially building contractors in disposing of construction and demolition (C&D) material.

The BBMP is authorised to collect a penalty of Rs 10,000 per tonne of debris dumped illegally on the city roads and storm water drains. The civic body is also authorised to collect Rs 5,000 in penalty from those responsible for creating debris black spots.

That said, who shall penalise the BBMP authorities responsible for dumping of C&D material and creating a black spot along the National College Ground?

A vacant space along the National College Ground compound wall looks like a mini dumping site for C&D material.

The vacant land belongs to the BBMP and the debris dumped on the vacant land too belongs to the BBMP, we are told. Dumping debris on the road side is illegal, and those dumping debris are liable to be punished under the Construction and Demolition Waste Management Rules 2016.

A stationary garbage compactor has been lying abandoned on the vacant land for quite a long time now; it has become an eyesore for pedestrians.

KAUSHIK JN

The other addition to the existing problems is the presence of a Goddess statue. Some devotees or activists have installed the statue as if there was no better place available in and around Basavanagudi.

"It is not only the vacant place where debris is being dumped. There are a few vacant places near educational institutions full of debris and garbage. The BBMP has to keep the places, especially those vacant lands under its management, neat and clean," said AAP

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8 »

> **"If not a parking lot, convert it into a public place for the benefit of senior citizens..**
> — Subramanyam S, pedestrian

INHUMAN TRAFFIC

'Bengaluru leads in trafficking of children for prostitution'

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TWEETS @BangaloreMIRROR

Bengaluru saw the highest number of cases under the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, in 2022.

According to the National Crime Records Bureau, the city recorded 155 incidents, involving 403 women as victims of immoral trafficking.

Bengaluru surpassed other cities, including Chennai which had the second highest number of cases, by 158% in this regard.

Additionally, the city ranked second in the country for human trafficking (sec 370 and 370A IPC) with 50 cases. Moreover, it also holds the unfortunate distinction of leading the nation in the trafficking of 138 children for the purpose of prostitution.

"Recently, there were major raids in the city and several women were rescued who were trafficked and forced into prostitution. On Tuesday the Chief Minister said the police should be vigilant about the incidents of human trafficking and launched an app called 'Vihaan' to ensure women's safety. The app deals with incidents of trafficking," said a source in the police department.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6 »

3 THINGS TO DO

01 Celebrating the legend

Don't miss the golden chance to be part of the centenary celebration of Chowdiah Awardee Dr TK Murthy this month. The celebrations are being organised by Sri Mookambika Talavadya Sangeetha Kalashale. Dr Murthy is one of the most renowned musicians in the history of India. He is a living legend, and he has received Padma Shri and Sangeetha Kalanidhi. The event also features violin performances by well-known artists.
Where: Pathi Sabhangana, NR Colony
When: January 26; 4:45 pm

02 For mother earth

Enjoy an immersive and thought-provoking performance that goes beyond just a musical experience as musician and environmental advocate Sushma Soma unveils 'Home SOS: Sounds of Sustainability'. The event is a call to action to save our planet and has been curated to engage the audience with a captivating blend of music. **Where: Bangalore Creative Circus**
When: January 20; 6 pm onwards

03 Here's to modern women

Amit Srivastava, an alumnus of IIT Delhi known for his captivating collection of award-winning artworks in classical realism, is making a triumphant return to Bengaluru. He is set to unveil his distinct solo exhibition. The show

Unfettered is a tribute to the spirit of the modern Indian woman, celebrating her self-reliance and independence. **Where: Gallery Time and Space, Lavelle Road; When: January 20–28; 11 am–7 pm**

EVERY TREE COUNTS

BCU to figure out all about its campus flora

Bengaluru City University plans to map every tree on its campus by identifying their age; environmental science dept to conduct tree census: vice-chancellor

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Even though the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) has not initiated a tree census, Bengaluru City University (BCU) is already taking the lead in this endeavour. The university aims to map every tree on its century-old campus, identifying their ages, particularly the heritage trees.

BCU Vice-Chancellor Prof Lingaraj Gandhi stated, "Despite having many old trees on the campus, we still want to obtain scientific details about each tree. Therefore, our environmental science department will conduct the tree census." Before the trifurcation of Bangalore University, the Central College campus was part of the original Bangalore University campus, adorned with numerous trees. Since the creation of BCU in 2017, the campus has witnessed several developmental activities.

A senior official noted that some trees on the campus are a century old, making it one of the rare city campuses where such ancient trees still thrive. Hence, conducting a census will provide accurate information about the age and species of these trees. There are allegations that a few trees were felled during the campus expansion, purportedly for trimming. Adjacent to the campus, metro works, including the construction of the Sir MV underground station, were undertaken. Conducting the latest tree census will precisely determine the surviving tree count.

Previously, BU had devised a plan to enhance greenery by initiating a sapling programme for its students

> **"Despite having many old trees on the campus, we still want to obtain scientific details about each tree**
> – Lingaraj Gandhi, Vice-Chancellor, BCU

Another official mentioned that many students and faculty may not be familiar with the scientific names and benefits of the trees. After completing the scientific survey, informational boards detailing tree specifics will be installed. In contrast, Bangalore University's Jnanabharthi campus, sprawling across 1,200 acres, boasts thousands of trees and includes a dedicated biopark with medicinal plants. The JB campus has undergone a scientific survey, and now BCU aims to follow in the footsteps of its predecessor, the seed university.

Previously, Bangalore University (BU) had devised a plan to enhance greenery by initiating a sapling programme for its students. The objective was not only to expand the city's green cover but also to instill a love for plants among students. The unique plan envisioned students taking responsibility for nurturing a sapling throughout their time on campus, symbolising joint growth.

According to the plan, every student, whether enrolled in an integrated studies programme or pursuing post-graduate studies upon joining the campus, would be encouraged to participate in the sapling programme. "An integrated course student commences at the undergraduate level and spends a minimum of five years. By providing them with a sapling, they could care for it throughout this period. The university would handle all aspects, from providing the sapling to ensuring water facilities. The only task for the student would be to take ownership of the plant during their stay. This approach aimed to acquaint students with the plant world. Despite being a promising plan, it unfortunately remained unimplemented," disclosed a BU official.

...But BBMP yet to get going with census

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Ordered by the Karnataka High Court in October 2019, Bengaluru's tree census project, which is expected to enumerate the remaining green cover of the city, has yet to see the light of day. After mulling over the court's order for over four years while the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) floated the tender for the project in early October last year, a work order for the project has not been issued yet.

According to officials from BBMP's Forest Department, a work order has not been issued as the selected bidder has yet to pay the security deposit.

"We have not received the security deposit from the successful bidder yet, and thus a work order has not been issued. The security deposit for the project has been set at 5% of the total funds allocated. The delay might be because the amount to be arranged for deposit is high. However, the work will begin on the next day of the issuance of the order," said BLG Swamy, Deputy Conservator of Forest, Forest Department, BBMP.

Interestingly, the Palike landed in a single bid situation in response to tenders floated for the project in October. This was after it floated eight tenders, one for each zone of BBMP, but received only two bids in response. Both bids were from the same person, landing the department in a single bid situation.

Following this, the civic agency issued a fresh set of tenders on October 26 after tweaking tender norms to attract more bidders for the census and having plans to award work orders by the end of November.

The tender terms for the enumeration of an estimated 20.8 lakh trees in the city include covering an area of 9761.6 sq km. The fund allocated for the project, which is expected to be completed within two to three months, is nearly Rs 4 crore. To carry out the process, Bengaluru has been divided into eight zones of approximately 1,000 sq km each.

The census will document the girth, unique tree ID, species name, and photograph of every tree in the city. The unique ID painted on every tree will include details such as the ward number and tree number. A QR code will also be put up on every tree located at the end of every stretch. Each code will contain information such as the total number of trees on that stretch to track illegal tree feeling.

The HC had directed BBMP to start the city's tree enumeration within one month, starting October 10, 2019. While there have been many attempts by the Palike to kick-start the survey in the past, all the plans so far have stayed only on the drawing board.

Laxity on animal helpline puts official in hot water

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Animal activists have welcomed the suspension of the Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services Director, who has been in the news for the wrong reasons. The Under Secretary of the Animal Husbandry and Fisheries Department has issued an order suspending Dr Manjunath S Palegar for closing the helpline, though the contract for maintaining it is valid for three more months.

The other complaint against him is slashing the number of employees at the helpline by 50% without the government's permission.

The January 17 order also says Dr Palegar did not conduct meetings on the maintenance of war rooms despite the Secretary's direction during meetings of June 20 and August 5, 2022.

Animal activists have welcomed the suspension

Failure to pay Rs 12,39,000 to Karnataka State Electronics Development Corporation Limited (Keonics) for the software of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and incurring a loss to the government by distributing manual dockets instead of computer-generated ones for attending distress calls are the other reasons. He is said to have also violated the norm to maintain the helpline and war room.

The Department has given Dr P Srinivas, Additional Director (Livestock Resources), the additional charge as the Director of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services.

Animal activists, who have been complaining about the closure of the helpline and the lack of ambulances, have welcomed the suspension.

Animal activist Arun Prasad said closure of the helpline had impacted the handling of animal cruelty and rescue cases as no docket can be raised, and this amounts to animal cruelty under PCA Act 1960.

Rashmi D'Souza, a former member of the Karnataka Animal Welfare Board, said authorities must probe the matter and restart the helpline.

Sujaya Jagadish, SPCA member, said that the suspension was long-pending. "He has failed miserably to fulfil his duties and has shown no accountability," she said.

PAGE 5 Man walks into date trap, gets attacked, stripped, robbed

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A bid to commercialise RO plants in Bengaluru

BBMP aims to curb political influence and generate revenue by inviting tenders for the maintenance of 600 reverse osmosis plants for improved water quality and transparency

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Many localities in the city depend on private water tankers due to lack of borewell facilities

There are approximately 600 reverse osmosis (RO) plants in the city. The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) has invested a considerable amount of money in establishing these RO plants across the city to provide affordable drinking water. While some are defunct, the remaining RO plants have been maintained by supporters of elected representatives and former corporators. Although the BBMP spent a significant amount on establishing the RO plants, the civic body did not receive any revenue from them over the years. Instead, these plants have become rehabilitation centres for chosen supporters of elected representatives and former corporators.

However, the BBMP has decided to float tenders, inviting bidders for the maintenance of RO plants in the city. The civic body expects to generate around Rs 2 crore in revenue by handing over the RO plants to private individuals on a contract basis.

Recently, the BBMP invited bidders for the maintenance of RO plants in the South Zone, RR Nagar, and other areas. Meanwhile, residents and rights activists have welcomed the BBMP's decision to float tenders, inviting bidders for the maintenance of RO plants.

"The BBMP has made the right decision. It will prevent the misuse of RO plants by politicians. Many RO plants are managed by supporters of politicians, with some even selling water from these plants as mineral water to residents for Rs 25 to Rs 30," said Brahmananda Reddy, a resident of Gupta Layout. Some residents complain about the poor quality of water at the RO plants. "Those managing the RO plants are not concerned about the water quality. There is no mechanism to check the water quality," said Raju Gowda, a resident of Basavanagar. For instance, the RO plant at Basavanagar has to depend on a private water tanker for water due to the lack of a borewell facility. Only the private tanker driver knows the source of water supplied to the RO plant.

> **"Those managing the RO plants are not concerned about the water quality. There is no mechanism to check the water quality**
>
> – Raju Gowda, resident, Basavanagar

"I urge the BBMP authorities to provide a borewell facility for the RO plant to prevent private tankers from supplying polluted water to the RO plant," said Basavaraj N, a resident.

There was intense competition among corporators and MLAs to establish RO plants a few years ago. With the BBMP Council term ending a few years back, most corporators did not show interest in the maintenance of the RO plants. "I urge the BBMP to install more RO plants to eliminate water mafias in residential areas. Properly maintained RO plants are crucial for supplying clean water, which would be a boon for poor and middle-class families," said Nagaraj S, a resident from Halasuru.

Ticket to ride: Metro's QR ticketing surpasses 25 lakh

QR ticketing system gains momentum, with a surge from 2.13 lakh at launch to 25.9 lakh users in December 2023

According to data by the Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL), the number of monthly users of the QR ticketing system has crossed the 25 lakh mark for the first time. Introduced in November 2022, a little over a year ago, the QR ticketing system in December 2023 has recorded a massive 25.9 lakh monthly users. The rising number of users opting to buy their tickets through the QR ticketing system points towards its popularity and convenience.

Data from BMRCL shows that the number of QR ticketing system users has been consistently growing since its introduction. The number of monthly QR code users stood at 2.13 lakh at its launch in November 2022, growing to 5 lakh in January 2023, 10 lakh in June 2023 and 25.9 lakh in December 2023. The inauguration of the entire Purple Line spanning 43 km (Whitefield-Challaghatta) in October last year has contributed to the increase in the metro's daily ridership as well as the number of monthly users of the QR ticketing system.

Despite this, data shows that the majority of metro commuters use closed-loop smart cards for everyday travel. The most recent data from the department shows that 51 per cent of daily passengers use smart cards, followed by tokens (34 per cent) and QR codes (15 per cent). Before the introduction of the QR ticketing system, the breakdown of ridership patterns stood at 60 per cent of passengers using the closed-loop smart cards while the other 40 per cent used tokens, pointing towards a pattern shift.

The QR ticketing system allows passengers to buy single-journey transit tickets through WhatsApp, the Namma Metro application, and

Paytm, among others. WhatsApp, when the initiative was first introduced, said that the facility was the first-ever QR ticketing service being provided on the application. The procedure is simple – a WhatsApp chatbot named Bhagya, who can converse in both Kannada and English, needs to be informed regarding the source and destination stations through the applications. After this, the chatbot churns out the fare, with a discount of 5 per cent. One can then confirm the ticket and buy it through various modes of online transactions. In November 2023, the BMRCL also introduced group tickets for a maximum of six passengers that can be bought through the QR ticketing system.

Shyam Sundar, a frequent metro user, noted that he has switched to using the QR tickets since its launch. "It is very convenient as I'm not required to carry my smart card everywhere I travel. Since I tend to lose the card very often and the amount on the card is non-refundable, the QR ticketing system makes purchasing tickets for daily travel worry-free. The procedure is also very simple, with a 5 per cent discount. For many, it eliminates the hassle of having to stand in long queues," he said.

— BMB

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Bad roads

Dasarahalli

The 12th Cross in Agrahara, Magadi Main Road is in poor condition.

Cart conundrum

Avenue Road

The problem of handcarts persistently parked on Avenue Road shows no signs of resolution.

Pipeline burst

Gandhinagar

In Gandhinagar Barangay, on Kalidasa Main Road, adjacent to Majestic, a water pipe has been leaking from beneath the footpath for the past few days.

Man walks into date trap, gets attacked, stripped, robbed

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In a gruesome hate crime, a member of the LGBTQ+ community in Bengaluru fell victim to a vicious assault after meeting someone on a dating app. The perpetrators, three assailants in addition to the initial contact, subjected the 34-year-old to brutal physical violence, humiliation, and robbery. The victim claimed that he was ambushed by the three people who attacked him with fists, kicks, boots, various weapons and even humiliated him by stripping him naked and urinating on him.

In a complaint letter to the police, the victim has said that he spoke to a person online on an app around 11:30 pm last Tuesday and made plans to meet him. During this chat, they exchanged phone numbers. During the call, the accused invited the victim to his home in SG Palya.

"When I reached his flat the next day, I went to his bedroom and three people hiding inside the room locked me inside. They started punching me in the face, then used a belt and a dagger to further hit me. They hit me with the base of the dagger on my head, which caused my head to bleed. They also took a video of me as I was struggling due to the violence. They used pliers to uproot the hair on my scalp," said the victim.

Social worker Dushyant Dubey, who is helping the victim with legal

Victim had tough time to convince cops about gravity of crime

procedures, added that they drew blood, and forced him to clean his own blood from the floor.

The victim, suffering four fractured ribs, head injuries from a dagger, and extortion of cash and valuables, reported the incident to the Madiwala police.

"Initially, the police filed a report under minimal charges, downplaying the severity of the crime," a source told BM.

The victim was robbed of Rs. 52,000 in cash and belongings and jewellery worth Rs. 75,000. The criminals remain at large, evading capture a week after the incident.

According to the source, outraged by the inadequate response, a detailed complaint has been submitted, highlighting the gravity of the situation. Additional sections, such as criminal conspiracy, grievous hurt, wrongful confinement, and extortion, were included to ensure a thorough investigation.

He also added that they are reaching out to authorities, including the ACP, DCP, Police Commissioner, and ADGP of Grievances and Human Rights.

"Substantial evidence, including medical reports, photographs, and financial transaction records, has been compiled to support the case. The victim has been unable to rest, sleep, or do anything properly due to the immense pain that he's constantly in as a result of the vicious assault," added Dubey.

After details of the incident were posted on social media, several netizens have demanded swift action to apprehend the perpetrators and ensure a fair investigation.

Thread threat to life continues

Absence of checks on banned manjha this Sankranthi leaves scars; rescue centres report rise in injuries

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While urban local bodies and law enforcement agencies in many cities across the country cracked down on dangerous manjhas used to fly kites this Sankranthi, it was relatively quiet in Bengaluru.

In the absence of any checks on banned products, nylon, glass-coated, and Chinese manjhas were sold and used rampantly during the harvest festival.

"We did not carry out any drive against Chinese manjha or similar banned products this year. We had no such orders from higher officials," said a Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara palike (BBMP) official from the Solid Waste Management department.

The outcome: City-based animal rescue centres are reporting a surge in manjha rescue cases after Sankranthi.

According to the Avian and Reptile Rehabilitation Center (ARRC), in contrast to the 156 animals rescued from manjhas between January 1 and January 17 in 2023, as many as 180 animals were rescued for the corresponding period this year. Further breakdown of bird rescues shows that in 2023, there were 129 rescue cases from January 1-13 and 27 rescue cases from January 14-17. However, this year, ARRC recorded 138 rescues from January 1-13 and 42 rescues from January 14-17.

Another rescue centre in the city, People for Animals (PfA)

Trapped in manjha, birds can suffer life-threatening injuries

> **There was no initiative by BBMP or police to spread awareness about the harmful impacts of manjhas this year. This has led to higher number**
>
> –Nawaz Shariff, PfA

says it has received nearly 50 manjha rescue calls so far this year. Like other parts of the country, Chinese manjha is banned in Bengaluru too, but the sale and use of this harmful thread has continued unabated. Rescue centres say in the absence of any initiative and crackdown on the sale and use of the banned manjha to fly kites, it is being used liberally by kite flyers. "While nylon, glass-coated, and Chinese manjhas are banned, they are being sold and used everywhere. Cotton thread is rarely spotted in shops now. The manjha rescue cases that we have been receiving also involve only plastic or glass-coated threads. There was no initiative by either BBMP or police this year to spread awareness about the harmful impacts of manjhas. This has led to higher numbers," said Dr (Colonel) Nawaz Shariff, chief veterinarian, PfA.

No support

NGOs say that to address manjha issue, while awareness sessions and other activities have been conducted by many rescue centers, lack of support from authorities leads to difficulties in organising these events.

"Support from BBMP authorities in obtaining permission to conduct sessions in schools etc would have been useful. Additionally, if government bodies establish a standardised protocol for reporting the manufacture and sale of manjha, it would encourage the public to report sales. It will also allow organisations like ours to continue awareness efforts and assist authorities in seizing the manja thus effectively implementing the manjha ban in our city, ultimately ensuring that no more lives are lost to this deadly menace in our beloved city," said Subiksha Venkatesh, rescue manager, ARRC.

2 inter-state weapon suppliers in police custody

The Central Crime Branch (CCB) Police have apprehended two men, both hailing from Maharashtra, for their involvement in trying to provide weapons to notorious individuals in Bengaluru. The police confiscated two handguns, nine live bullets, and a vehicle from the arrested suspects, Rahul Satish Mane and Mallik. Notably, Mane and Mallik had a previous arrest record in connection with another case and were incarcerated at the Parappana Agrahara Central Prison. It is alleged that they established connections with rowdy elements during their imprisonment and maintained contact to facilitate weapon supply. The CCB's organised crime wing executed the arrests on the morning of January 14, thwarting an attempt by the accused to sell arms near Ullal within the jurisdiction of Jnanabharathi Police Station. Chandragupta, Additional Commissioner of Police, Crime, disclosed that the apprehended individuals were interstate agents involved in supplying arms to rowdy elements in Bengaluru. The police filed multiple cases against them, including one in Bengaluru, and an investigation is underway following a case registration at Jnana Bharathi Police Station.

Robbery at elderly woman's house: 1 culprit nabbed

The Rajarajeshwari Nagar Police have apprehended a man, identified as Kumar alias Lodde, for orchestrating a robbery at the residence of an elderly woman in the city with the assistance of his accomplice. The victim, Gowramma, was robbed of jewellery and cash. The stolen items encompassed 120 grams of gold -- a 15-gram necklace, a 12-gram chain, rings, earrings, 100 grams of silver, and Rs 50,000 in cash. Police state that the accused specifically targeted houses of single-occupant women and elderly individuals. While one suspect has been detained, authorities are actively pursuing others implicated in the crime.

The incident unfolded at approximately 4:30 pm when Gowramma returned home after escorting her grandchildren to tuition. The assailants, Kumar and his associate, allegedly entered her house, restraining the woman with ropes and covering her face with a cap before looting the premises. One perpetrator ensured the victim remained subdued, preventing any calls for help, while the other went about with the robbery. The woman was freed after the culprits fled following the robbery.

A formal complaint has been lodged at the Rajarajeshwari Nagar Police station.

Old cars out, tax relief in!

State's progressive vehicle scrapping policy incentivises electric vehicle adoption with tax relief, targeting 15-year-old vehicles; aims to reduce pollution and enhance road safety

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Despite available scrapping facilities in Devanahalli, Koratagere, and Koppal, only a few owners are presently scrapping their vehicles

In a move to encourage vehicle scrapping, the State Government has revised its policy, introducing incentives for individuals retiring their old vehicles. Minister HK Patil, following a Cabinet meeting, expressed determination to implement the revised scrapping policy, emphasising its role in reducing air pollution and enhancing road safety. As part of the initiative, owners scrapping vehicles and opting for electric ones will receive tax relief. The tax waiver for cars and two-wheelers will vary based on their values. For example, a Rs 5 lakh car could get a Rs 10,000 tax waiver, and a two-wheeler under Rs 1 lakh might enjoy a Rs 1,000 tax waiver. This tiered approach aims to incentivise participation in the scrapping programme and promote the adoption of newer, eco-friendly vehicles.

The Karnataka State Road Safety Authority's proposal received administrative approval. Unlike the existing policy, which encourages voluntary retirement of vehicles aged 15 years or older, the revised approach introduces specific incentives. The transport department estimates around 16 lakh vehicles in the state have reached the 15-year mark. Despite existing Registered Vehicle Scrapping Facilities in Devanahalli, Koratagere, and Koppal, only a limited number of owners are currently scrapping their vehicles.

Owners who scrap their vehicles receive compensation based on the steel value and a Certificate of Destruction (CoD). For those purchasing a new vehicle after scrapping, a proposed tax waiver of 15 per cent to 25 per cent, depending on the tax paid for the previous vehicle, is suggested. A CoD-titled vehicle denotes one dismantled, scrapped, or rendered non-roadworthy, serving as proof of its unsuitability for road use.

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways introduced the Vehicle Scrapping Policy, outlining a framework of incentives and disincentives to establish an ecosystem for the gradual phase-out of older, unfit, and polluting vehicles nationwide. The policy focuses on scrapping vehicles based on their fitness, assessed through Automated Testing Stations.

So far, 15 states and Union Territories have already declared concessions in Motor Vehicle Tax against the Certificate of Deposit. These regions include Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Assam, Jharkhand, Chandigarh, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Punjab, Mizoram, Chhattisgarh, and Kerala. An official said that older vehicles contribute 10 to 12 times more pollution than fit vehicles and pose safety risks on the roads. To address environmental concerns and enhance safety for both riders and pedestrians, the Ministry introduced the Voluntary Vehicle-Fleet Modernisation Program (VVMP) or the 'Vehicle Scrapping Policy.'

For those purchasing a new vehicle after scrapping, a proposed tax waiver of 15% to 25%, depending on the tax paid for the previous vehicle

"The policy aims to achieve several objectives, including reducing the population of old and defective vehicles, cutting down vehicular air pollutants to meet India's climate commitments, enhancing road and vehicular safety, improving fuel efficiency, formalising the informal vehicle scrapping industry, and increasing the availability of low-cost raw materials for the automotive, steel, and electronics industries. The anticipated ecosystem is projected to attract additional investments of approximately Rs 10,000 Crore and create 35,000 job opportunities," an official said.

The official further added that the Ministry plans to publish draft notifications in the coming weeks, opening them for public input and stakeholder feedback for 30 days. The criteria for vehicle scrapping are primarily based on fitness assessments conducted through Automated Fitness Centres for commercial vehicles and the Non-Renewal of Registration for private vehicles.

Trash troubles taint Doddakallasandra Lake

Plastic waste infiltrating the surroundings of the lake

Iffath Fathima@timesgroup.com
TWEETS @BangaloreMIRROR

In a distressing situation, residents near Doddakallasandra Lake have raised an alarm over the rampant dumping of waste and subsequent burning, leading to a severe environmental hazard. The lake, renowned for its rich biodiversity, is now under threat as plastic waste infiltrates its waters, prompting concerned citizens to turn to the Sahaaya app in hopes of urgent intervention from civic authorities.

As plastics break down into micro plastics, they can have detrimental effects on the flora and fauna

Lake activists disclosed that burning waste near the lake releases toxic pollutants into the air, posing severe health risks to residents and walkers in the vicinity. The smoke compromises air quality and also destroys the very purpose for which people visit the lake – to enjoy fresh air during their walks.

Secondly, the plastic waste that finds its way into the lake poses a threat to the aquatic ecosystem. As plastics break down into microplastics, they can have detrimental effects on the flora and fauna, affecting the ecosystem in Doddakallasandra Lake.

Lake activist Prathap Gowda witnessed sacks of solid waste scattered across the road adjacent to Doddakallasandra Lake and raised a complaint in the BBMP Sahaaya app. "I noticed filled sacks of solid waste, disposable tea cups, debris, and household waste dumped all across the road. Plastics and other waste had also been burnt. All this is happening next to Doddakallasandra Lake. I request the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB) & Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) team to take cognisance of the offence and necessary actions to stop it," he said.

Soundararajan, a resident of Doddakallasandra, said, "On the west side of Doddakallasandra near an open area, dumping of plastic garbage happens daily, and in the morning, someone used to burn all plastics daily. We can see smoke in that area daily around 8 am. It seems that the open area was allotted to BBMP while forming Narayan Nagar laid out for public utility like a park, children's play area, playground, etc, and BBMP can develop as required."

Immoral trafficking cases spike in city

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Activists in the city emphasised that human trafficking extends beyond prostitution, encompassing domestic workers and organ trafficking. They argued specific aspects of the trafficking act have failed to consider the socio-economic circumstances of those involved.

In 2018, The Trafficking of Persons (Prevention, Protection and Rehabilitation) Bill, was introduced in the parliament. Since then, activists across the country have maintained that the aforesaid bill to criminalise trafficking will in turn affect the lives of the sex workers who often face raids, exploitation and even police brutality.

David Bodapati, a human rights activist with over two decades of experience working with sexual minorities and sex workers, criticised the bill for its failure to implement holistic policies and programmes.

He noted trafficking is undeniably a criminal offence warranting stringent measures against unscrupulous individuals and criminal networks. However, according to Bodapati, the 2018 Bill, designed to tackle trafficking, places disproportionate emphasis on the victims, particularly women and children, rather than addressing the perpetrators of the crime — 'the bill appears to reduce trafficking to a mere law and order issue, neglecting the underlying socio-economic factors'.

"This approach risks further criminalisation and imprisonment of individuals not involved in trafficking, such as the impoverished, beggars, sex workers, transgender individuals (and other gender and sexual minorities engaged in begging), bonded labourers, juveniles, and surrogates. The bill, under the guise of prevention, rescue, and rehabilitation, may inadvertently subject these vulnerable groups to injustice rather than delivering the justice it claims to provide. Numerous children, for instance, have been placed in juvenile homes against their will after 'raids and rescue' operations, depriving them of freedom and agency, treating them as criminals," he said.

David added that the trafficking bill has failed to address the socio-economic roots of the problem by overlooking the connection between trafficking and broader structural issues like poverty, lack of equal opportunities, and skewed development policies.

"Individuals aspiring for improved living conditions often find themselves compelled to move in unsafe ways and accept work in criminalised environments, such as sex work or as undocumented workers abroad. Instead of adopting a comprehensive approach that considers the factors rendering individuals vulnerable to trafficking, the bill takes a carceral stance, criminalising these vulnerable groups," he added.

8-year-old ragpicker electrocuted

An eight-year-old ragpicker got electrocuted on Thursday while he was trying to pull a guy rope fixed to a transformer adjacent to a drain at Manchenahalli in Chikkaballapura, according to officials of Bangalore Electricity Supply Company Limited (BESCOM). "While Nagendra pulled the guy wire it came in contact with the LT circuit and he got electrocuted. There is no fault of BESCOM in this case," said a BESCOM official.

A guy wire is a tensioned cable designed to add stability to a freestanding structure. Senior BESCOM officials visited the spot and were waiting for the report from the Electrical Inspectorate on the accident, he said. **BMB**

Pervs on the run after indecent act

Police have registered an FIR against three individuals in connection with an incident where a young woman was spanked at a hotel in the city.

The police said on Thursday they have initiated a search for the three accused.

According to the police, the incident occurred on December 30, 2023, at Nammoota hotel in Vijayanagar around 7:30 pm. However, the FIR was officially lodged with the police on January 10.

The police said that the accused had formed a gang targeting young women who visit hotels. One of the accused would touch them inappropriately, while the others watched. **–IANS**

Double boost on Devanahalli–Bangarpet rail line

Rail activists happy that frequency of trains can now be upped, but want Airport MEMU to be encouraged

Melvin Mathew
c-melvin.mathew@timesgroup.com
TWEETS @BangaloreMIRROR

Doubling work planned beween Devanahalli and Bangarpet via Kolar

To push for increased train frequency from Devanahalli to Bangarpet, the South Western Railways (SWR) is planning to conduct doubling work for the stretch. A tender has been floated for the final location survey for the project.

Last month, SWR announced the extension of MEMU trains from Bengaluru to Devanahalli to Chikkaballapur. This decision was taken as a result of low patronage for the airport train and demand for an extension till Chikkballapura. Now, SWR has floated a tender for a final location survey for doubling work between Devanahalli and Bangarpet via Kolar with automatic signalling. As per SWR estimates, it will be a 125-km stretch and the survey project cost would be Rs 2.5 crore.

From December 11, SWR has started running six train services that have extended services from Devanahalli to Chikkabalapur.

"The project is with the conception wing of the Railways; 30-km doubling work from Yelahanka to Devanahalli is in progress and another 125-km doubling work is in progress. A tender has been floated for the final survey for the doubling work along with automatic signalling," said a senior SWR official.

While they welcome the doubling work, rail activists question if this would help improve the patronage for the Airport MEMU. "We welcome the move to double the track. With the doubling of the track, the frequency of the trains can be increased. The work should be fast-tracked and all services should be extended till Bangarpet. However, it's not a solution to the low patronage," said rail activist Rajmumar Dugar.

Dugar said that until the suburban route is connected, there will be low patronage for the airport line. "A majority of the IT belt stays in Electronic City and Whitefield and there are no train services to reach the airport. Additionally, the trains do not halt at intermediate stations like Bettahalsur or Doddjala, and Channasandra. In fact, for roughly 12 km from Channasandra to Yelahanka, there is no halt. These intermediate station stoppages must be immediately implemented," he said.

Additionally, quadrupling work is in progress between Bengaluru Cantonment- Baiyappanahalli(13.20 km) and Baiyappanahalli to Whitefield (24.69 km). Quadrupling of both lines is expected to be completed by December 2024.

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FARNAZ

Civic body 'caught dumping C&D debris'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

KAUSHIK JN

leader from Ba`savanagudi, Manjurao Papanna.

A resident of Basavanagudi, on the condition of anonymity, said the BBMP has been spending a lot of money on conducting Swachh Survey every year to improve Bengaluru's position among the clean cities in the country.

"How will Bengaluru find a better place among the clean cities when the BBMP itself is creating black spots by dumping its own construction and demolition material on the vacant land adjacent to National College Ground," asked the resident.

Subramanyam S, a pedestrian, suggested the BBMP convert the vacant land into a parking lot: "It will generate revenue for the civic body. If not a parking lot, convert it into a public place for the benefit of senior citizens who can spend some time in the morning and evening."

"Some irresponsible auto rickshaw drivers and pedestrians are using the place to attend nature's call. It has become a black spot as well as a yellow spot. It will be better if the BBMP takes measures to remove the C&D debris and keep the place clean and neat," said Subramanyam.

When informed about the black and yellow spots, Chickpet MLA Uday B Garudachar said he will look into it. "I am sending my assistant to the spot. I will revert after the feedback received from my assistant," said Garudachar.

Meanwhile, BBMP ward (Sunkenahalli) engineer Lingaraje Gowda assured to clear debris from the spot: "Though the debris was dumped by another department, I will take measures to clear it soon."

Govt cracks whip against 8 agencies that failed to provide skill education

The state government has cracked the whip against eight project implementing agencies that have failed to provide skill education to candidates even after getting financial aid from the state government under the 'Deen Dayal Grameen Kaushalya Yojana', and instructed officials to blacklist them and file criminal cases immediately.

Sharan Prakash Patil, the Minister for Medical Education, Skill Development and Livelihood, in a meeting here on Wednesday expressed displeasure against the agencies that have failed to implement the Government's ambitious scheme aimed at providing vocational training to those studying diploma, ITI and other job-oriented courses. He instructed officials to register criminal cases against them in the jurisdictional police stations to review the progress of the National Rural Livelihood Mission. Patil also instructed officials to blacklist errant project implementing agencies (PIA) immediately and to stop issuing tenders to such firms in future. He directed the officials to recover Rs 74.65 crore with interest from the PIAs for violating the rules of this scheme being implemented jointly by the central and state governments to provide vocational training for candidates studying job-oriented courses in rural and urban areas. The agencies that have failed to achieve the desired goal will be considered as defaulters and action will be taken against officials who have released funds to these companies, he said.

The Minister asked the officials to collect complete details of some of these agencies that are functioning from other states, and inform the Centre and prevent them from receiving any funds. He also ordered a probe against unqualified agencies promising to provide training by giving false information and warned of strict disciplinary action against officials if they fail to act. Pulling up the officials over laxity in implementing the scheme, Patil warned of strict action against them.

"The officials must visit the training centres at the district and taluk levels every month and review the progress. And the lower-rung officials must submit reports to the senior officers. I will be holding monthly meetings to review the progress and will not hesitate to act against those showing laxity," warned the Minister. **PTI**

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I, Arunananda Divyanathan R/o No.6, Narayana Building, Madanayakanahalli, Madavara, Bengaluru 562123 have changed my name to Arul Anand Divyanathan affidavit Dt.18/01/2024 notary Harisha G, B'luru

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I, Ankur Jain, R/O #D502, Vaswani Brentwood, Thubarahalli, Bangalore-560066, have changed my minor daughter's name from Kashvi Jain to Advika Jain vide affidavit no IN-KA32350092721519V "

I Venkatesh S/O, Venkanna R/o 103, Tanvi Residency, 3rd Main, Chikkamaranahalli, Behind Devasandra Bus Stop, New Bel Road, Bangalore 560054 have changed my name to V Venkatesh .

I, Shekar Halgur Rajegowda R/o No.151 2nd main 1st stage MKS layout,Doddakallasandra Bengaluru 560062 have changed my name to Shekhar Halgur Rajegowda affidavit Dt.18/01/2024 notary Harisha G, B'luru

I, Sudhir Nayak S/O Kaup Narasimha Nayak, R/o A-1106, NCC Meadows, Puttenahalli, Doddabalapur Road,Yelahanka, Bengaluru, Karnataka-560064, have changed my name and shall hereafter be Known as Suudhir Nayak.

I, Suresha K L S/o Lingegowda R/o No.9, Dwarkamai, 2nd main, Gangamma Garden, Malagala, Bengaluru 560072 have changed my name to Suresh Kunigal Lingegowda affidavit Dt.18/01/2024 notary Harisha G, B'luru

I, SOMISETTY, Residing at Divyadarsh No 661/10-1, 11th Cross, 7th Block, Jayanagar, Bangalore-560082. Have changed My name to SOMISETTY JAGADESWARA ANITHA vide affidavit dated 18/01/2024 before Notary Aravind Patil G.G Bangalore

I Suriya Khanum Suleman W/o Mohamed Suleman Abdul Samad R/o No: 18/1, 1st Main Road, 10th Cross Bapujinagar, Bangalore 560026 have changed my name to Suriya Khanum for all purposes

I Nazeer Ahmed S/o Mohamed Hussain Chotasab R/o No: 17, 1st Main Road, 1st Cross, Padarayanapura Bangalore 560026 have changed my name to Abdul Nazeer for all purposes

I Rajesh M S/O, Manjunath S R/o No. 3102, 10th Floor, Tower- 3, Prestige Park Square, Basavanapura Village, Bannerghatta Main Road, Bengaluru - 560083 have changed my name to Rajesh Manjunath.

I Draxayani Basavraj Kulkarni/sarita Basavaraj Kulkarni/sarita Agrawal/draxayani Agrawal W/O, Nitin Agrawal R/o Snn Raj Serenity P3-1202, Yelenahalli Begur, Bangalore 560068 have changed my name to Draxayani Kulkarni.

I Saroja N (Saroja Nanjappa) W/O, Late Munikrishnappa R/o #29, 4th Cross, Ramanjaneya Layout, Marathahalli Ring Road, Chinnappanahalli, Bangalore-560037. have changed my name to Sarojamma N (Sarojamma Nanjappa).

I, Manpreet Singh S/O Baldev Singh R/O Moh Sunder nagar, M H Chownk, Jammu Jalandhar By Pass Road, Pathankot declare that my last name is Singh and my first name is Manpreet

I, SITARA SUDHIR ACHAR, D/o Sudhir Achar, R/o G1502, Greenwich, Brigade Metropous, Whitefield Main Road, near Phoenix Market City, G C Palya, Mahadevapura, Bengaluru - 560048, have changed may name as SITARA ACHAR, vide affidavit dated 18.01.2024, sworn before notary S. Subashini, Bengaluru.

I, Mohamed Kaleemula Mohamed Saleemulla, S/o Mohammed Saleemulla R/at No.25, Sanabil School road, Sunrise Layout, Hommadevana halli, Gottigere, Bangalore-560083 have changed my name to Mohammed Kaleemulla, vide affidavit dated 18.01.2023 Notary R. Basavaraja, B.lore.

I, Mahmood Ayaz Abdul Azeez S/o Abdul Azeez R/o #42 , Rabiya Mansion, 4th Cross , Krishnappa Layout, Bhuvaneshwari Nagar. , B'luru-560032 have changed my name as given name : Mohammed Ayaz

I Prem Kumar Kuttappan S/O, Gopalan Nair R/o No 11 Vinayaka Lake View Residency Kanakanagar Lake Line Road Keregowdru Layout Bangalore 560043 have changed my name to Prem Kumar.

I Rajesh M S/O, Manjunath S R/o No. 3102, 10th Floor, Tower- 3, Prestige Park Square, Basavanapura Village, Bannerghatta Main Road, Begaluru South, Bengaluru - 560083 have changed my name to Rajesh Manjunath.

I Imtiaz pasha S/o Anwar Pasha R/o #2/1 Badrunnis manzil 2nd flr C street Parappa Field Neelsandra B'luru-560047 have changed my name to A Imtiyaz Pasha for all purposes

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THIS is to bring to the notice of the general public that one ID Card of Ms. Akila Banu N issued by ICICI Bank Itd. having ID card no. 2305759 has been found missing and/or lost on 01.01.2024 Anyone, who finds the said ID card, is requested to return the said ID card to the Manager Debt Services & Management Group, ICICI Bank Limited...Therefore, all the customers of ICICI Bank Limited are hereby notified not to make any payment to any unauthorized person holding the said ID card no. 2305759. Please take further notice that anybody making payment to any person holding the said ID card shall do so at his/her own costs, risk and peril and ICICI Bank shall not be bound and/or responsible for any payment.
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Place: Bangalore
For ICIC Bank Ltd.
-Sd/-

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HEALTH TIP: Bitter gourd contains nutrients such as iron, potassium, and vitamins A and C

Studies have shown that matcha tea improves the health of your liver

BangaloreMirror | 9
Friday, January 19, 2024
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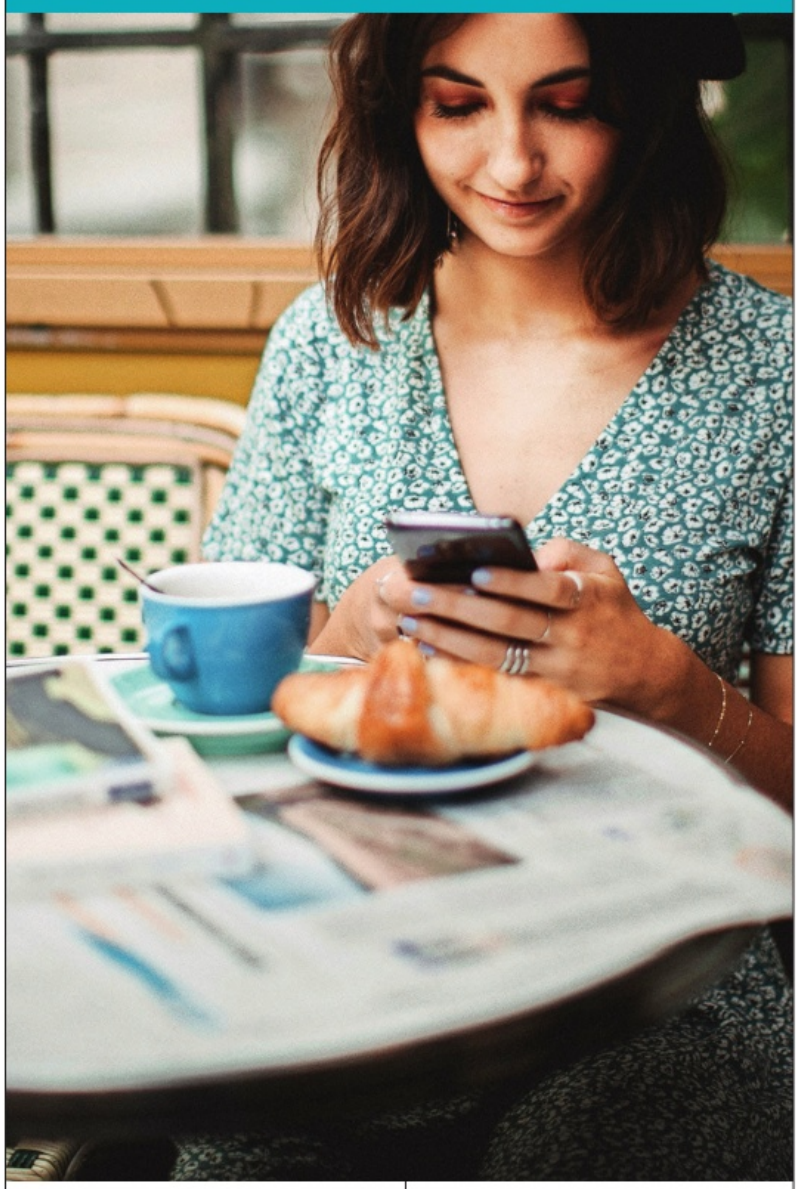
CLICK BAIT

Some people who share fake news on social media actually think they're helping the world



Misinformation is the number one risk facing society over the next two years, according to the World Economic Forum.

With key elections due in the US, UK and many other nations this year, an onslaught of political misinformation can be expected.

Some of this material is distributed through paid advertising on social media, like the AI generated "deep fake" videos of British prime minister Rishi Sunak doing the rounds. However, we know that much of the spread of false material is due to the actions of individual social media users.

Many people share political news online. Inevitably some of that news is false. Fake political news is, after all, common. It's not unusual to see it as you scroll through your social media feeds.

One of the main ways in which fake news spreads is when people share it to their own social networks. Some genuinely believe the story to be true and share it by mistake. We've found that around 20 per cent of people report having shared a story they later found out was untrue.

However, like other researchers, we also find that around one in 10 people admit sharing political information that they knew at the time was untrue.

Why would these people deliberately spread lies? Are they deliberately setting out to do harm? Or do they perhaps think it's acceptable to spread because it supports ideas they hold strongly and "might as well be true"?

Meaning well, meaning ill

Only a minority of people share false information but, given the vast scale of social media platforms, even that can lead to fake stories spreading like wildfire. This makes it harder for people to get news they can trust and leads people to believe things that simply aren't true.

Our research revealed that some people shared fake stories because they thought they were funny (one said because they thought it was "ludicrous", for example). Others shared the misinformation specifically to highlight that it was false. Others minimised the harm they were doing by suggesting it wasn't actually that serious if they shared fake news.

Our findings reveal that some people behave in an antisocial way when it comes to fake news, deliberately sharing false information to achieve some personal objective, even if it means attacking other people or trying to manipulate them.

Sharing false stories in this way can be used, for example, to affect people's political views, whether by supporting a smear campaign against a politician or by boosting a politician's clout.

People driven by such reasons seem not to be bothered by whether the news they are sharing is true or false, and may even view sharing news as a means of manipulation. At the very least, these people are being uncaring about the harmful effects of their actions.

In sharp contrast to these, some people share political news, whether true or false, with the best intentions. They seem to see sharing fake news as a way to make the world better.

"Good" reasons for sharing can reflect a desire to protect others (for example, by alerting them to potential dangers), to encourage people to "do the right thing", or even to become socially or politically engaged.

Other people may use news sharing as a force for good by pointing out that a particular story is false. Ironically though, that means the false story may spread even further.

Dealing with fake news

People can have strong reactions when they see a friend or family member sharing material they know is untrue. This is not a big surprise because misinformation tends to rely on negative sentiment and to appeal to our morals. It is the stories that make us emotional (for example by scaring us) that go viral in the first place.

However, the next time you see someone sharing a story you know to be false, and you think about giving them a piece of your mind or blocking them, remember that they may be unaware that they were doing harm and may even have been trying to do good.

It may be that they were thinking only about themselves, but it may also be they have shared that story thinking that it benefits others.

Sharing false stories, even when done with the best intentions, may have implications that go beyond people's personal goals for sharing. When people expose others to misinformation in order to debunk it, they are potentially risking unintended political consequences such as increasing cynical perceptions towards election campaigns and politicians.

One way to reduce this risk and support the battle against misinformation is to follow guidance on how to report false stories, for example by marking them as false on the platform.

And if you yourself are tempted to share material that might not be true — for whatever reason — it is best to find other ways to get your message across.

(By Rotem Perach, Deborah Husbands and Tom Buchanan, University of Westminster, The Conversation)

MIRRORLIGHTS

Obsessive-compulsive disorder linked to increased risk of death: Study

People with obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) could be more likely to die from both natural and unnatural causes than those without the illness, according to a Swedish study published in The BMJ.

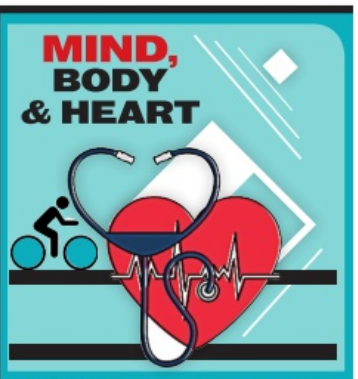
The researchers point out that many of the natural causes of death are preventable, suggesting that better surveillance, prevention, and early intervention strategies should be implemented to reduce the risk of fatal outcomes in people with OCD.

OCD is typically a long-term psychiatric disorder affecting about two per cent of the population. It is characterised by intrusive thoughts, urges or images that trigger high levels of anxiety and other distressing feelings - known as obsessions - that the person tries to neutralise by engaging in repetitive behaviours or rituals - known as compulsions.

OCD is also associated with academic underachievement, poor work prospects, alcohol and substance use disorders, and an increased risk of death.

Previous studies on specific causes of death in OCD have mainly focused on unnatural causes (eg, suicide), but little is known about specific natural causes.

To fill this knowledge gap, researchers set out to estimate the risk of all causes and cause-specific death in people with OCD compared with matched unaffected people from the general population and with their unaffected siblings. Using data from several Swedish population registers, they identified 61,378 people with OCD and 613,780 individuals without OCD matched (1:10) by sex, birth year, and county of residence, and a further sibling group of 34,085 people with OCD and 47,874 without OCD. — ANI



All you need to know about...

Feeding pets

DOs

Research Before Buying
Because numerous food brands are available, it is important to weigh the benefits and drawbacks of each. Take your fur baby's age, activity level, and health into consideration before deciding on a particular brand or type of dog food. Your vet will also help you decide on the pet foods and the nutritional requirements for your pet pal.

Feed At Regular Times
Regular feeding will help regulate your pet's digestion, keep their energy levels consistent, get them used to a routine and keep them from overeating. Following the same feeding times and a set number of meals per day will help with this.

Access To Fresh Water
Make sure your pet has access to fresh, clean water at all times. Keep their drinking water in a convenient location, and change or refill it on a regular basis.

Read The Labels
Avoid products with artificial colours or flavours, fillers such as corn or wheat, as well as highly-processed, sugary treats. Natural, preservative-free food is always preferred.

DON'TS

Don't Play During Feeds
It can trigger or annoy your fur baby when you play, poke or pet them while they're enjoying their meal.

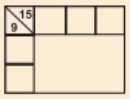
Don't Overfeed
Too much food can result in obesity, which is bad for any animal's health. Carrying extra weight can put a strain on their joints and organs, and they might develop chronic illnesses later in life.

Don't Give Table Scraps
Scraps are high in sodium and fat. It's better to stick to their approved treats and nutritious food and not get them used to your leftovers.

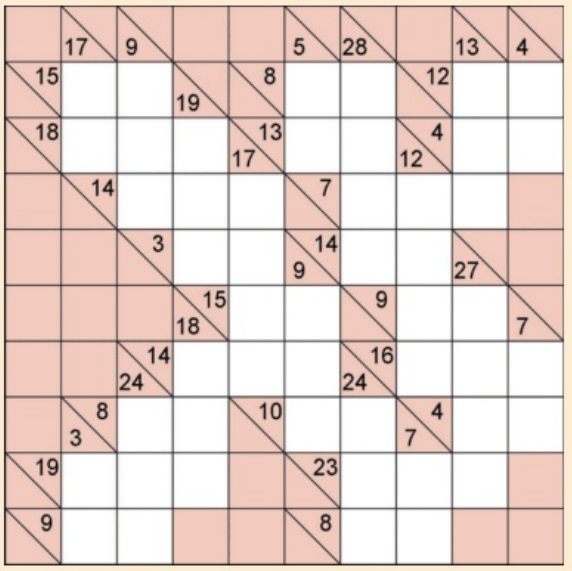
—Kayalvizhi Arivalan, Femina

Kakuro

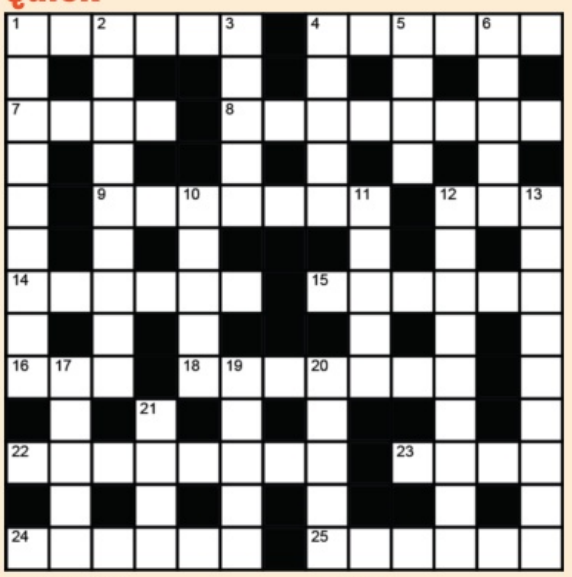
The numbers in the grey squares refer to the sums of the digits that you must fill into the empty spaces directly below or to the right of the grey square containing the number. For instance, in the given example, the 3 boxes horizontally next to 15 must contain 3 digits that add up to 15, whereas for 9, it is the 2 boxes placed vertically under it that must add up to 9. No zeros are used here, only the digits 1 through 9.



Note: A digit cannot appear more than once in any particular digit combination. For instance, in the example, we cannot have the combination of 4+7+4 for 15.



Quick



ACROSS

1 Prize (6)
4 Petty ruler (6)
7 Convent women (4)
8 Venerates or worships (8)
9 Raised high or glorified (7)
12 Beavers' project (3)
14 Bangalore's favourite beverage (6)
15 Sign of the Fish (6)
16 Indian dish (3)
18 Wandered away (7)
22 Involuntary reactions to stimuli (8)
23 Not in favour of (4)
24 Flows out (6)
25 Red Indian tents (6)

DOWN

1 Forsook or relinquished (9)
2 Excellent or fine; arousing awe? (9)
3 Teach by repitition (5)
4 Talked (5)
5 Follow (4)
6 Scene of conflict (5)
10 Testifies (5)
11 Each day (5)
12 Moral degeneration (9)
13 Enigmas (9)
17 Helps a felon (5)
19 Uses to the limit (5)
20 Desirable trait (5)
21 The French for 'blue' (4)

Quoteuncode

This puzzle is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that Q equals C, it will equal C throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

Today's CLUE: P EQUALS G

DI PYD NXBD VIW NBED, CDIM KIQEP NXBD QCE'D NITUQEP.

Linemaro

I will stop loving you when an apple grows from a mango tree on the 30th of February

Mindchow

The best way to cheer yourself up is to try to cheer somebody else up

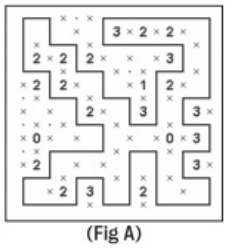
Joke of the day

I would imagine if you can understand morse code, a tap dancer would drive you crazy

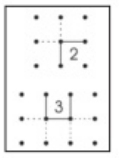
Loop

Rules

» Connect adjacent dots with vertical or horizontal lines, creating a single loop (Fig A). » Crossovers or branches are not allowed (As shown by dotted lines in Fig B). » Numbers in the puzzle indicate the number of lines that should surround it, while empty cells may be surrounded by any number of lines. » You can't draw lines around zeros. » Each puzzle has just one unique solution.



(Fig A)

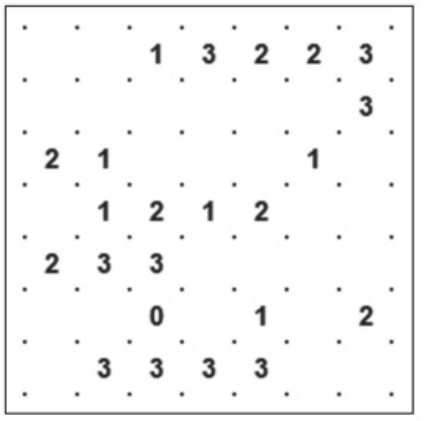


(Fig B) Not Allowed

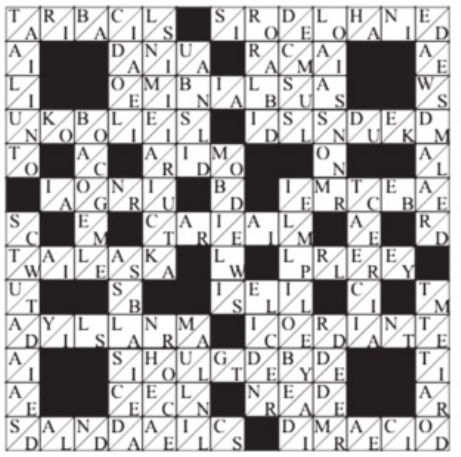
How to begin:

Example (Fig A) – Begin with the zero next to 3. Since no lines can be drawn around zero, mark crosses around it, as shown. Now there is a cross in one space around 3. So we know the three lines of 3 can only be drawn in the remaining three spaces. Next, these lines can only be extended in one direction each. Continue, using the same logic.

Hints: Keep eliminating possibilities by marking crosses in spaces between dots where a line isn't possible, i.e., if you have already completed required lines or where a line extension may create a branch or cause a dead-end (Fig B)



Strikeout



This crossword has no clues and the answer is there waiting for you. All you have to do is find it in each square. You have a choice of two letters, one of which you must strike out. If you choose correctly, you will be left with a grid that contains real words.

Fast five

How long do you think it will take you to unscramble the ten words shown below and fit them correctly into the grid in the order given one letter has already been entered to get you started? on your marks, get set...

1	2	3	4	5 P
6				
7				
8				
9				

ACROSS

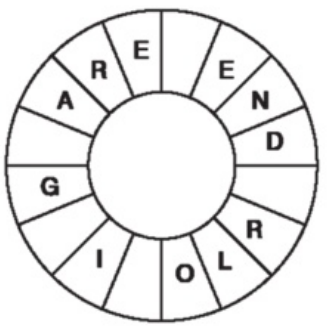
1 Stepe; 6 Gamma; 7 Mites; 8 Sloes; 9 Outer

DOWN

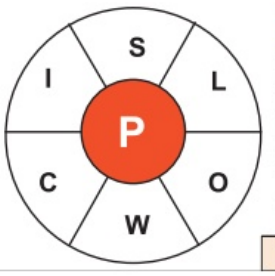
1 Limos; 2 Out at; 3 Eg set; 4 Mr Mee; 5 Apses

Mensapuzzle

Find a familiar phrase (6, 6, 4) reading clockwise. You have to find the starting point and provide the missing letters.



Bull's eye



How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown? Every word must contain the central letter. There should be one seven-letter word. British English Dictionary is used as a reference.

04 Average; 05 Good; 07 Outstanding

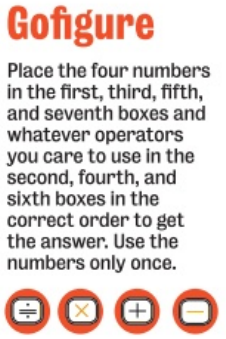
SudokuChallenge

1	6			7			2	
8		5						
7	4	9			6			
		8	7				6	
		2	4		5	8		
	5				8	4		
			1			2	9	3
						7		4
	7			2			1	6

To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from one to nine must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Gofigure

Place the four numbers in the first, third, fifth, and seventh boxes and whatever operators you care to use in the second, fourth, and sixth boxes in the correct order to get the answer. Use the numbers only once.



Easy = 8

3 6 6 7

Medium = 22

3 7 9 9

Hard = 4

1 6 8 2

Hocusfocus

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

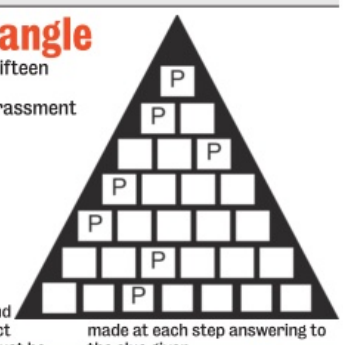
Differences: 1. Hand is moved. **2.** Leg is moved. **3.** Shirt collar is missing. **4.** Bush is smaller. **5.** Arm is showing. **6.** Axle is missing

Riddler

What is the next number in the series: 11; 42; 228; 1,344 ?

Alpha triangle

1 Atomic number Fifteen
2 (22/7)
3 Sartorial embarrassment
4 Dock
5 Cost
6 Coded message
7 Renal



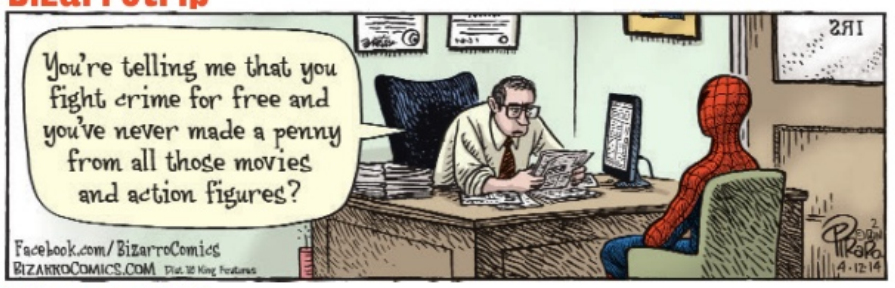
Beginning at the top move towards the bottom seven-letter word by adding a letter at each step and rearranging. A correct and different word must be made at each step answering to the clue given.

DIFFICULT TO SOLVE? FIND THESE SOLUTIONS ON THE NEXT PAGE

COMICS

Redeye by Mel Casson

Bizarrotrip


You're telling me that you fight crime for free and you've never made a penny from all those movies and action figures?
Facebook.com/BizarroComics
BizarroComics.com

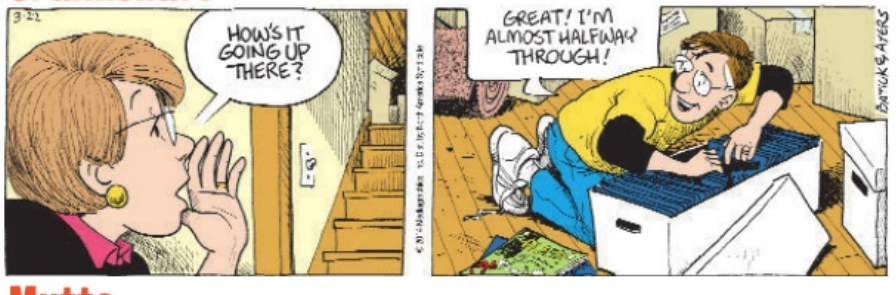
Diamond Lil

I WENT TO A SENIORS MOVEMENT CLASS TODAY
WHAT KINDS OF MOVEMENT?
COUCH TO FRIDGE, COUCH TO BATHROOM, AND BOWEL
www.creators.com

Hart of the city

FROM THAT DAY FORWARD, I DECIDED TO DEVOTE MYSELF TO THE REPAIR AND PRESERVATION OF TOYS...
...AND THAT LED TO THIS PLACE..."THE SIR HENRY SAMSON MEMORIAL DOLL HOSPITAL"! A SANCTUARY FOR THE BROKEN AND ABUSED!
WHAT DOES "SANCTUARY" MEAN?
A PLACE WHERE TOYS CAN HIDE FROM CHILDREN!
www.gocomics.com

Crankshaft



Mutts

WISE SPHINX, I FEEL LIKE A NOBODY! JUST ANOTHER FACE IN THE CROWD.
FRET NOT! YOU'RE A UNIQUE BEING! ONE OF A KIND...
JUST LIKE EVERYBODY ELSE.
muttscomics.com

WHAT YOUR STARS SAY TODAY

Aries Mar 21 – Apr 20
Today, disputes with siblings may likely be resolved, strengthening your relationship with them. Your vital force seems good, aiding you in completing difficult projects easily. You may expand your network after a work-related trip. Helping a needy person may increase your prestige. Meeting an influential person could be beneficial for your professional future.

Taurus Apr 21 – May 20
Today, you may be busy with your family and feel happy enjoying time with them or friends. Expect new sources of income, boosting your financial health. Control expenditures on worthless stuff and invest in worthwhile things to increase your social status. You may also be busy with your children's academics.

Gemini May 21 – Jun 21
Today, you may feel energetic, with fast performance and the ability to complete tasks within the timeframe. Encourage someone who is depressed. Your prestige may increase, and there may be a balance between domestic and professional life. Those involved in import/export, trading, or strategy analysis may do well.

Cancer Jun 22 – July 23
Today, dissatisfaction may arise, making you lazy and dull, affecting your project's speed. Lovebirds are advised to avoid important decisions about marriage. Job seekers may face disappointments in interviews, wasting precious time on worthless tasks.

Leo Jul 24 – Aug 23
Today, you may feel dull and lose focus on your targets, making hypothetical decisions beyond reality. High expectations and impatience may lead to upset feelings. Be careful in adventure tours and rush driving. By the afternoon, profits may increase, and you may start working with new clients, boosting business.

Virgo Aug 24 – Sep 23
Today, you may control internal weaknesses after self-analysis, and gaining confidence. Fight against addictions and expect singles to find a good match. Lovebirds have clarity in their relationship. Opportunities for overseas travel may arise, and students may hear good news in academics.

Libra Sep 24 – Oct 22
Today, situations are under control, and you may plan for overseas travel. Your network may help on the work front. Increased domestic harmony and creativity may lead to acquiring artefacts or creative items for family or office. Plan for movies or entertainment with friends or family.

Scorpio Oct 23 – Nov 22
At the start of the week, expect financial gains and a balance between earnings and expenses. Better performance in your job, new responsibilities, and resolving financial matters positively. Control over opponents and hidden enemies is likely, and health would improve.

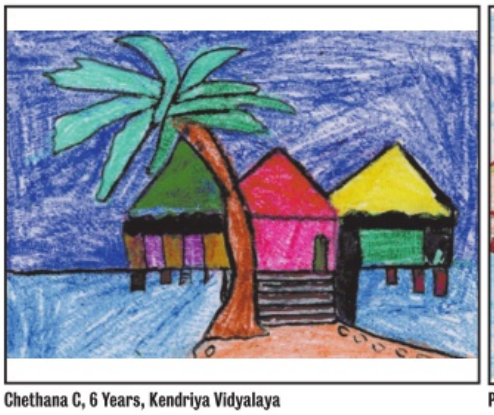
Sagittarius Nov 23 – Dec 22
Today, plan to renovate your house and decorate it to maintain social status. Harmony with the spouse and settling disputes with friends, co-workers, and partners. You should expect good news in terms of litigations.

Capricorn Dec 23 – Jan 20
Today, feel energetic, with improvements in health. Good news from near relatives, excellent performance in the office, and trust in subordinate staff. Increase in prestige and positive news in legal matters.

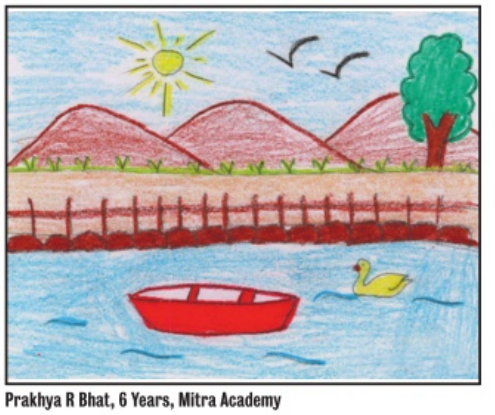
Aquarius Jan 21 – Feb 19
Today, life may seem difficult, and seeking advice from elders is advisable. Patience is crucial, and concerns about kids' education may lead to a short trip. Avoid investment speculation and consider enrolling in a course to enhance your educational skills.

Pisces Feb 20 – Mar 20
Today is not a positive day, and you may be disappointed. Focus on your work may not be good, affecting routine tasks and delaying projects. Postpone investments in fixed assets and construction plans for a house or office.

KIDZONE



Chethana C, 6 Years, Kendriya Vidyalaya



Prakhya R Bhat, 6 Years, Mitra Academy

Kidzone, Bangalore Mirror, No. 74/2, Sanjana Plaza, 4th & 5th Floor, Elephant Rock Road, Jayanagar 3rd block, Bengaluru-560 011;
Please send hard copies of your artwork in A4 size only.

SOLUTIONS

SOLVE IN 1M
√((84/25)+(16/25))+30/3
√(3.36 + 0.64) + 30/3
√(4) + 30/3
2 + 10
= 12

RIDDLER
8,040 (-4, x6)

FAST FIVE

S	T	E	E	P
M	A	G	M	A
I	T	E	M	S
L	O	S	E	S
O	U	T	R	E

STRIKE OUT

S	A	N	D	A	L	S	■	D	R	A	C	O
E	■	E	E	L	■	N	E	E	■	R	■	■
D	I	S	A	R	M	■	I	O	D	A	T	E
I	■	S	H	U	T	E	Y	E	■	T	■	■
U	■	■	B	■	I	L	L	■	C	■	M	■
T	I	L	A	R	■	L	■	P	R	E	Y	■
S	■	E	■	C	R	E	A	M	■	A	■	D
■	A	G	N	I	■	B	■	E	M	C	E	■
T	■	A	■	R	I	O	■	O	■	■	■	L
N	O	B	L	E	S	■	I	S	S	U	E	D
I	■	O	M	N	I	B	U	S	■	■	■	W
A	■	D	I	A	■	A	M	I	■	■	■	A
T	R	A	I	L	■	I	R	E	L	A	N	D

QUICK

I	S	S	U	E	S	■	T	E	P	E	E	S
T	■	E	■	E	■	E	■	C	■	E	■	■
R	E	F	L	E	X	E	S	■	A	N	T	I
B	■	B	■	A	■	S	■	E	■	R	■	■
D	A	L	■	S	T	R	A	Y	E	D	■	■
■	U	■	R	■	L	■	A	■	T	■	■	■
C	O	F	F	E	E	■	P	I	S	C	E	S
N	■	R	■	V	■	A	■	E	■	Y	■	■
O	■	E	X	A	L	T	E	D	■	D	A	M
U	■	N	U	S	■	I	D	O	L	I	S	E
N	U	S	■	■	R	■	P	■	A	■	■	S
E	■	O	■	■	■	R	■	■	■	R	■	■
R	E	W	A	R	D	■	S	A	T	R	A	P

MENSA PUZZLE
TENDER LOVING CARE.

QUOTE UNCODE
To get what you want, STOP doing what isn't working.

BULL'S EYE
clip, COWSLIP, lisp, slip, slop, spoil, wisp

SUDOKU

1	6	3	5	7	4	9	2	8
8	2	5	3	9	1	6	4	7
7	4	9	2	8	6	3	5	1
4	9	8	7	3	2	1	6	5
3	1	2	4	6	5	8	7	9
6	5	7	9	1	8	4	3	2
5	8	6	1	4	7	2	9	3
2	3	1	6	5	9	7	8	4
9	7	4	8	2	3	5	1	6

ALPHA TRIANGLE
P, Pl, Rip, Pier, Price, Cipher, Nephric.

GO FIGURE
Easy
6 + 3 + 6 − 7 = 8
Medium
9 − 3 + 7 + 9 = 22
Hard
2 + 8 / 1 − 6 = 4

LOOP

KAKURO

Volume No 17, Issue No 015 RNI NO:KARENG/2007/21142 Published for the Proprietors, Metropolitan Media Company Ltd by R.J. Prakashan at No. 74/2, Sanjana Plaza, 4th & 5th Floor, Elephant Rock Road, Jayanagar 3rd block, Bengaluru-560 011 and printed by him at Bennett Coleman & Co Ltd., The Times of India Press, No. 9/10/11-A, 4th Main, KIADB Bommasandra Industrial Area, Anekal Taluk, Bangalore – 560 099 (Phones : Press : 080-22899999; Editorial : 080-40877666, Fax – 40877545, Registered Office: No. 74/2, Sanjana Plaza, 4th & 5th Floor, Elephant Rock Road, Jayanagar 3rd block, Bengaluru – 560 011, Email : mybangaloremirror@timesgroup.com Editor : Ms. Seena Menon – responsible for selection of news under PRB Act. © Reproduction in whole or in part without the written permission of the Publisher is prohibited.

 # Oppenheimer all the way
'Oppenheimer' on Thursday led the shortlist of films vying for recognition at Britain's forthcoming BAFTA awards, earning an unrivalled 13 nominations, including a first ever for leading actor Cillian Murphy

SANDALWOOD SHOTS
Y MAHESWARA REDDY

With mentor's blessings

Rudra Shiva, who has been associate and assistant director for 12 years in Sandalwood, is all set to debut as an independent director with the movie Shabash. Its muhurat function was held at a temple where veteran director Om Sai Prakash sounded the clap board. The movie's first look poster was also launched on the day.

"My joy knew no bounds when my teacher, guide and well-wisher Om Sai Prakash Sir attended the muhurat function. The shooting of the movie is in progress. It belongs to the action drama genre," said Rudra Shiva.

Rudra Shiva has worked as associate for directors Shivamani, Ayyappa Sharma, Pallakki Radhakrishna, and Om Sai Prakash. Shabash is being bankrolled by Ravindra Muthappa under the ACE 22 banner. Sharath and Nisarga are the lead pair in this movie. Sharath, who has acted in movies Ka and Malebillu, makes a comeback after a gap of four years.

The first schedule of the shooting is being held in and around Bengaluru for 15 days. The second schedule is planned at Davangere, Shivamogga, Chikmagalur and surrounding areas.

Karate chops

Esham and Haseen Khan, who handled the megaphone for Ikkat, are gearing up to helm the movie Vidyapati. Nagabhushan, who played the lead in Tagaru Palya, is the hero in this movie. Vidyapati is being bankrolled by Dolly Dhananjay under the Daali Pictures banner. Its title and first-look poster was released on the occasion of Sankranthi.

Esham Khan and Haseen are brothers and Vidyapati is their second movie as directors. "We did a web series – Loose Connection and Hate You Romeo. Our first Kannada movie is Ikkat. We decided to make a Kannada movie with the same cast and crew. So, Nagabhushan plays the lead in Vidyapati," said Esham Khan.

He said that audiences will see Nagabhushan in a different avatar in Vidyapati. "He is a different get up (karate player) in the movie. We have consciously included all elements, including commercial elements, to entertain family as well as mass audiences," he said.

Murali is the choreographer while Lavith is the cinematographer. Dossmode aka Dheerendra Doss is the music director.

It's not that simple

Vijay Sethupathi explains his clothes not about simplicity but about comfort

Vijay Sethupathi, known for his acting prowess, often receives compliments for his work and humble demeanour. However, there's one label he doesn't want associated with him – being called a "simple man."

During a recent Bollywood Hungama event, when a fan praised his simplicity, Sethupathi gently disagreed, saying, "Everybody says this, but it is not true." He clarified that his comfortable peach shirt and trousers aren't about simplicity; they are expensive choices.

Sethupathi, gaining recognition in Hindi-speaking regions, emphasized that attending events in simple clothes isn't a "drama" for him; it's his way of living. He stressed, "They have been looking at me and telling me that I am very simple. But this is not the case. I do not even do drama. I am really comfortable in this." If he felt comfortable in a blazer and a James Bond hat, he would wear that, he added, rejecting the "simple man" label.

His recent release, "Merry Christmas," marks his third Hindi film, following Santosh Sivan's "Mumbaikar" and Atlee Kumar's Shah Rukh Khan-starrer "Jawan."

Sethupathi also appeared in the Hindi web series "Farzi," alongside Shahid Kapoor. In another interview, he explained his limited public appearances are to avoid overexposure and ensuring audiences connect with his characters.

—ETimes

Off to Sundance

Actors Richa Chadha and Ali Fazal have headed to the US for the world premiere of their debut production "Girls Will Be Girls" at the Sundance Film Festival. The film will be screened at the festival on January 20.

Excited about it, Richa in a statement said, "Getting m through in such a competitive cinema festival is itself a big deal. I have high hopes from Shuchi (Shuchi Talati) as a director and the rank newcomers as actors. Kani (Malayalam film actress Kani Kusruti), the world has witnessed her brilliance again in 'Killer Soup'. I feel blessed".

Ali added, "As new founders, we're exploring new worlds through new stories, Sundanc happens to be the greatest step one into the next worlds to be discovered by us hopefully soon. I am thrilled that we get to share our creation with the world. Also very glad to be blessed with such an amazing jury on world competition that's gonna watch Girls Will Be Girls."

Directed by Shuchi Talati, the film is a compelling story set in a boarding school in a small Himalayan hill town.

— ANI